

**WRP Guidance Sheet
&
Planning Checklists**

Phase I- Preparing Application Package

1. **DC.** DC receives request from landowner and makes arrangements for on-site evaluation with WRP Team (agency partners, ARC(P), and wildlife biologist). WRP Team makes site review for land eligibility based on eligibility criteria (WRP Manual 514.11). Complete acreage estimates for each category of eligibility. Mark tentative boundary in field or on aerial photo. If eligible, proceed to next step.
 - Second visit may be needed with a soil scientist and/or engineer if questions arise that need their expertise.
2. **DC.** Fill out the **application form, AD-1153**. Complete AD-1153 in its entirety with legal names, addresses, phone numbers, signatures of applicant(s) and any others with a legal interest in the property, taxpayer ID number(s) of applicant(s), signature of District Conservationist, and legal description of proposed WRP acres. Obtain a copy of the deed or other ownership documents from applicant. A copy of creation documents is needed for all trusts, partnerships, corporations, etc. The document should indicate who has signatory authority. Examples of the documents include Articles of Incorporation, Partnership Agreements, Power of Attorney documents, Trust information, etc. We need to get copies of any of these that apply to the project.
3. **DC and ARC(P).** If the deed does not clearly demonstrate clear title to and ownership of the easement area, make arrangements with the local title/abstract company to perform a title search (approx. \$75). *In the Arkansas Valley, it may be prudent to do this regardless of the ownership documents produced.*
4. (Date Rec'd in SO). **DC, ARC(P) & Biologist.** Provide the following items:
 - a. **AD-1153 Application (to include on the application legal description of preliminary proposed easement area, recorded landowners name, address, and telephone number)**
 - b. Provide the completed **ranking form** for the current year.
 - c. Aerial photo of the entire subject property with location of the proposed easement area identified, and an estimate of the acres in the proposed easement identified.
 - d. Township plat map with entire owned subject property identified.
 - e. County map showing the location of the entire owned property and all applicant owned tracts in the county.
 - f. Aerial photograph indicating the location and acreage of any conservation agreement, contract, or easement of any type that is associated with any part of the farm.
 - g. Any crop base acres or allotments that are located in the easement area and a written statement by the landowner as to whether the crop base is to be acquired by NRCS, if so how much, or moved to another parcel. Documentation of production data will be provided to NRCS by the landowner.
 - h. **Written permission from the landowner or an authorized representative authorizing the assigned appraiser to enter the property for appraisal purposes.**
 - i. Current information as to the status of title ownership such as copies of deeds.
 - j. Documentation of water rights owned, including wells on the property to be appraised.
 - k. A copy of the recorded written access to the easement area.
 - l. Delineate and provide the eligible acres according to WRP Manual 514.11. Be attentive to the acreage of "other" land. If the application exceeds a 1:1 ratio of eligible land to "other land", then a written request to the STC is required with technical justification. Provide with support documentation from the USF&WS or DOW.
 - m. Provide the **Preliminary Certificate of Inspection and Possession**
 - n. Provide the **Hazardous Substance Examination Checklist**.
 - o. Provide the **CPA-52, Environmental Effects** form.

- p. Provide draft Restoration Plan (see attached checklist or 514.19 of manual). Use **AD-1155 or Preliminary Plan Worksheet** for practices and costs. Needs to reflect the contributions received from partners.
5. **RC-P, Skadeland, Rasmussen.** Send the application package to RC-P, and he will review the application package for the above information. If acceptable, he will also notify Rasmussen to proceed to the next step.
6. **Rasmussen** assigns a contract number, and notifies RC-P of the contract number.
7. **RC-P.** When funding is available, RC-P prepares and sends the **Letter of Tentative Acceptance to DC.** DC sends to participant, with copy to the AC and Rasmussen, along with a form **AD-1159, Intent to Continue** which the applicant must sign and return to DC. Send by certified mail with return receipt. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the letter and form. The Intent to Continue must be returned to DC within 15 days of delivery to the applicant as evidenced by the return receipt from the Post Office. DC provides the original signed AD-1159 to RC-P.
8. (**Date Rec'd in SO**) **Rasmussen.** Rasmussen notifies Sansburn to commit funds in FFIS.

Phase 2- Finalizing the Easement

9. **Rasmussen.** Orders appraisal from a Certified Appraiser using the revised Task/Delivery Order form, submit directly to the appraiser. Provide notification to appraiser to contact DC, copy of correspondence to DC and AC. Also notify appraiser to send appraisal report to Rasmussen.
10. **DC.** Meet with the appraiser and the applicant on the site.
11. (**Date Rec'd in SO**) **DC, Biologist, and ARC(P).** Steps 17 through 19 will proceed concurrently with steps 16, 20 and 21. **Closing will not be scheduled until steps 17 through 19 are completed.:**
- a. **Final Restoration Cost Share Agreement AD-1151, supporting job sheets, & special provisions/violations.**
 - b. **CPA-52 Environmental Effects.**
 - c. **AD-1154 contract.** (Contract Period is from the easement closing date, which will be entered at the time of closing, to ten years last installation of last Cost Shared Practice. **NOTE: Suggest using 9-30-xxxx or 12-31-xxxx as end date.**
 - d. **Habitat Acres Enrolled Worksheet and Partner Worksheet**
 - e. All other "bulleted" items as required in **Wetland Reserve Program Manual, dated October 2000, 514.19 d (Final Plan Contents).** The landowner does not sign the LTP unless the landowner has a special interest to contract for or install all practices. The alternative is that NRCS will contract for plan implementation with another entity.
12. **RC-P & Skadeland.** Completes final technical review of the restoration plan to insure the plan is complete and meets program objectives. RC-P will also have Soils and/or Engineering review if needed. If OK, forwards the plan to Alexander for approval.
13. **Alexander & Rasmussen.** Sign the restoration cost share agreement, provide signed agreement to Rasmussen for funds management purposes and filing. Also provide DC and AC with copy of plan.
14. (**Date**) **Rasmussen.** Appraiser will send **AD-1161** with taxpayers ID to Rasmussen for review. Rasmussen informs DC of offer value. Rasmussen provides the **AD-1161** to Sansburn, who makes payment and provides a copy to the appropriate District Conservationist. Sansburn obligates funds in the FFIS Database.

15. (____ Date) Administrative review of appraisal
16. (____ Date) Technical review of appraisal (required on initial appraisal done by appraiser and 10% thereafter unless; over \$1 million or if concern by the administrative reviewer)
17. **Rasmussen.** Prepare the **AD-1157, Option to Purchase Agreement**. Send **AD-1157** to DC who sends it certified/return receipt to participant. Provide copy of the correspondence to AC. Provide self-addressed stamped envelope for the applicant to return the form to the DC. The applicant has 15 days to return the signed **AD-1157**. Be sure to send 3 copies to producer, along with a copy of the Warranty Easement Deed. Producer keeps one copy, and the other two are returned to Rasmussen, for Dennis's signature.
18. **Rasmussen and DC.** After the signed Option to Purchase Agreement is received, Rasmussen orders the land survey from one of the approved surveyors after discussion with the DC. (Contract Specialist, Tony Doxtater, has A&E contract with several surveyors in the state). By cover letter with a copy to the AC, send a Survey Task/Delivery Order to surveyor. Instruct the surveyor to contact the DC in order to provide the on-site WRP boundary locations. Also instruct the surveyor to send survey and request for payment to Rasmussen.
19. (____ Date) If survey shows an increase or a decrease in acres, must go back to the appraiser and have them update the appraisal based on the final acres.
20. **Rasmussen.** If survey shows more or less acres than on **Option to Purchase, AD-1157**, an **amended Option to Purchase, AD-1157A**, will be sent. (SAME AS STEP 17)
21. (____ Date) **Rasmussen** Fills out **AD-1161** to pay surveyor. Be sure to include the surveyor's taxpayer ID number on this form. Rasmussen provides the **AD-1161** to Sansburn to obligate funds, and make payment. Sansburn provides a copy to the DC and Rasmussen.
22. **Rasmussen.** Orders **title insurance commitment** from an approved local title/abstract company.
23. **Rasmussen.** Once commitment received, notifies the DC to initiate an **LTP-23, Certificate of Use and Consent**, for completion. DC should call Finstad as necessary to discuss encumbrances that may affect NRCS' consideration in signing the form. Provides completed form to AC and Rasmussen.
24. **Rasmussen.** Transmits information to USDA Office of General Counsel (OGC) for a **Preliminary Title Opinion (PTO)**, with copy to DC and AC.
25. **Rasmussen.** Receives PTO and prepares **Closing Instructions** for Closing Agent (w/ copies to DC and AC). **Closing will not be scheduled until Steps 11 through 13 are completed.**
26. **Rasmussen.** Closing scheduled. **Closing will not be scheduled until Steps 11 through 13 are completed.** Closing Agent coordinates with land owner(s) on this, and provides Rasmussen with a target date for closing and an estimate of closing costs.
27. **Rasmussen.** After closing, Closing Agent records **Warranty Easement Deed, CCC-1255 or CCC-1255A, Subordination Agreement and Limited Lien Waiver, AD-1158, and other documents**, then forwards recorded originals and title insurance policy to Donna who forwards copies to DC and AC.
28. **Rasmussen.** Coordinates with DC on submission of **NRCS-LTP-22, Final Certificate of Inspection and Possession**, and provides to Rasmussen with a copy to AC.
29. **Rasmussen.** Transmits information to OGC for **Final Title Opinion**. OGC sends Rasmussen Final Title Opinion. Rasmussen sends copies to DC and ARC(P).

30. (_____ **Date**) **Rasmussen**. Prepares **AD-1161** for making easement payment and paying closing costs for recording easement date. Rasmussen will provide copy to the DC and ARC(P), original to Sansburn for payment.
31. **Rasmussen**. Works with GIS to digitize easement delineation into Web Easement Toolkit.

Phase 3- Implementing the Restoration Plan

DC. Easement Management

- Implement the restoration cost share agreement just as any other LTC is implemented, unless another form of contracting has been selected (i.e. Coop. Agreement or federal contract)
- Annual WRP Monitoring Checklist to be done utilizing Web Easement Toolkit by October 1st annually
- Annual Compatible Use Authorization by April 1st annually
- DC submits contract modifications to Alexander as needed
- Rasmussen records "restoration completion" upon receipt of last CIN payment application and updates National Database

What happens when a portion of an easement is sold. New file should contain:

Transfer Agreement

Survey from the new landowner

Copy of title insurance policy from the original easement

Indemnification Agreement

Subordination agreement

New conservation plan